

Heroism of Fire Fighter Captain Charles Gowdy and His Men

A FIERY BED

**Capt. Gowdy Was Slowly
Roasted to Death**

**Mr. George Thoman Heard
His Last Words.**

**"O, Lord! O, Jesus!
Save Me! He Prayed,**

**But He Was Beyond All
Human Aid Then,**

**The Thrilling Story of a Man
Who Was Caught Under The
Falling Wall and Escaped**

**As reported by, THE EVENING
HERALD..January 5, 1892**

To few men does a more thrilling experience come in a lifetime than that which befell George Frank Thoman, an employee of the Phillips-Buttorff Manufacturing Company, in the great fire of Saturday night. He was on the roof of the company's store when the wall of the Warren building toppled over and crushed it, and with the three colored firemen, was borne downward with the falling falling roof to the ground floor of the building, over forty feet below. That he lives to tell the story is most wonderful, and that he is not even seriously hurt, and is able to be about, is only short of miraculous.

A HERALD reporter yesterday afternoon interviewed Mr. Thoman and obtained from him not only an account of his own awful experience, but learned that Charlie Gowdy was not killed by the crashing wall that swept him down from the horrified gaze of the thousands who were watching the flames, but that he suffered the most fearful of deaths, being roasted alive as he lay

Captain Gowdy's Fight To Save The Phillips-Buttorff

wounded and pinioned by timbers in the bottom of the Phillips-Buttorff building only a few feet from where Thoman found himself after the crash. More than this, Thoman talked with the doomed Capt. Gowdy as he lay in the burning wreck of the building and heard his last words-the last at least that were ever heard by human ears.

The continuous full story regarding the deaths of Captain Gowdy, Harvey Ewing and Stokely Allen is headlined on the front page of The Evening Herald on January 5th, 1982 as recounted by George Thoman.

NEED TO KNOW

Captain Charles Gowdy, Harvey Ewing and Stokely Allen were a part of the first all Black Fire Company in Nashville, Tennessee

Mayor Guild issued a Proclamation for the three Fallen Black Firefighters for their heroism and made it a holiday for the funeral

The funeral services for the men took place in the halls of the House of Representatives at the Capital

Charles Clark Gowdy was married to Mary A.F. Watson on July 30, 1874

Firefighter Stokely Allen was the brother-in-law of Gowdy

Nashville's First All Black Fire Unit, Engine Company No. 4 was organized January 15, 1885

Gowdy was the highest ranking black firefighter in the country

Gowdy was a constable and member of the Nashville City Council

Correct legal last name is Gowdey

THE GREAT FISK UNIVERSITY



Two years after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, John Ogden, Rev. Erastus Milo Cravath and Rev. P. Smith established the Fisk School.



During that same time the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands was established under the U.S. War Department by the Congress.

President Abraham Lincoln had proposed General Bowen Fisk as an appointee, but due to the assassination of Lincoln, President Andrew Johnson appointed Fisk as a senior officer in charge of the bureau in Tennessee and Kentucky. Fisk was committed to securing the civil rights for the emancipated African Americans during reconstruction. He endowed \$30,000 to the school.

Ogden, Cravath and Smith among others in their movement which was sponsored by the American Missionary Association shared a belief that they would create an educational institution that would be open to all regardless of their race and would measure itself by "the highest standards, not of negro education but of American education at it's best". Fisk University was incorporated on August 22, 1867.

WORLD RENOWNED FISK JUBILEE SINGERS

George L. White, the school's treasurer and music professor in 1871, put together a choral ensemble of students in the hopes of raising money for the school.

During that time the nine member group, which later grew to eleven went on a national tour. White named the group the, Jubilee Singers. As the tour moved toward the north, the Jubilee Singers were being recognized for their incredible voices which gave breath to old spirituals that were rarely heard outside of the churches.

In 1873, the eleven member singing ensemble embarked on a tour of Europe. While in Great Britain, the famed singers performed before Queen Victoria.

Let it be known that the Jubilee Singers and George L. White wanted the world to know that this great institution will stand, breaking racial barriers. Illustrating excellence and pride in all that has walked through the doors of this great institution.

***Thank You Jubilee Singers
Ella Sheppard, Maggie Porter,
Minnie Tate, Jennie Jackson, Eliza Walker, Issac Dickerson, Ben Holmes, Greene Evans, Thomas Rutling, Phoebe Anderson and George Wells***

Letter From The Publisher

History Books May Have Forgotten Us, But The Newspapers Never Did

It is amazing that African Americans have one month to celebrate the history of the all the many contributions that this great country has benefited from. If the history books were written correctly in the beginning, I believe that there would be a greater respect amongst each other. My father once told me, "If you don't know the history of the world, of other cultures, races and religions then you won't be able to understand the presence."

During the Reconstruction Era, Nashville newspapers reported stories that were horrid, unbelievable and in some cases celebratory. The Evening Herald was a major publication and did a great job covering Captain Gowdy and his men. On the other side, Blacks had their own newspapers telling their stories, but unlike the major city wide newspaper the black publishers and reporters had to be careful in covering the news. The first recorded black newspaper in Nashville was named, THE COLORED TENNESSEAN, the first publication date was in 1865. It was amazing for me to actually see this publication at the Tennessee State Library. At times, Blacks were honored for their contributions in the white newspapers.

February 1969, THE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN put together a series of weekly articles and newspapers during Negro History Week, which was a first. John Seigenthaler, was the managing editor at the time. He thought that due to all of the rioting and civil unrest in Nashville, that four of THE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN'S black journalists should be the ones to develop the stories that they felt were important for the newspaper. Those four journalists were William Reed, Reginald Stuart, Myron Towns and Billy Easley. The NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN also put together a stapled publication that were given to the public schools. I remember when my father Billy Easley, who was one of those four journalist, showed me a copy of the stapled newspaper and the smile on his face. Those four men worked hard to educate Nashvillians about Black History.

My father passed away in 2014 and I can remember him constantly teaching me about history all my life. One of the first stories of many that he wrote about and shared with me was the story of Captain Charles Gowdy (Gowdey). It was equally important that I understood there were many Whites and Jews that were killed for being sympathetic to Black causes. As a child, the history lessons were boring to me, but as I got older what he instilled in me gave me a fuller understanding of the world we live in. So to continue what he would want me to do as well as all the other story tellers during his time and for hundreds of years, the time was now to continue telling our stories. Stories that will educate, celebrate and allow us to understand the struggles that have been forgotten. The feedback and response that I received when I decided to publish THE NASHVILLE HISTORICAL was overwhelmingly positive. This is the first annual issue of THE NASHVILLE HISTORICAL and we will continue to tell the stories that have been overlooked during Black History Month. Hopefully, you will find this issue informative and educational.

Thank You



Cassandra Easley / Publisher

Special Thanks To

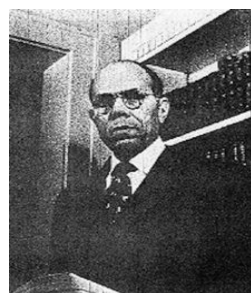
- My Mother Gladys Easley**
- Dr. Reavis Mitchell**
- Dr. Mary Clark**
- Carolyn Joy**
- Prentice Ashford**
- James Smithson**
- Mercedes Benz of Music City**
- Tennessee State Library**
- Metropolitan Nashville Public Library**
- Belmont University**
- Vanderbilt Black Cultural Center**
- Fisk University**
- Lipscomb University**

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach the stars to change the world."
- Harriet Tubman

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I always bear in mind that my mission is to leave behind me the kind of impression that will make it easier for those who follow."
- Marian Anderson

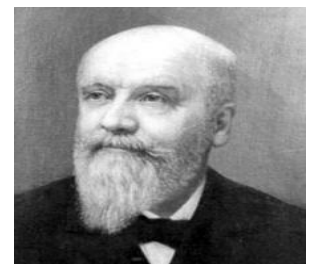
THE NASHVILLE HISTORICAL
2020
We are looking for contributing writers and advertising representatives for the next publication. If you have an interest, send an email to cassandra@cvonmedia.com



David Crothwait
Nashville Born
Inventor
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Ida B. Wells
Journalist, educator and activist
pg.3

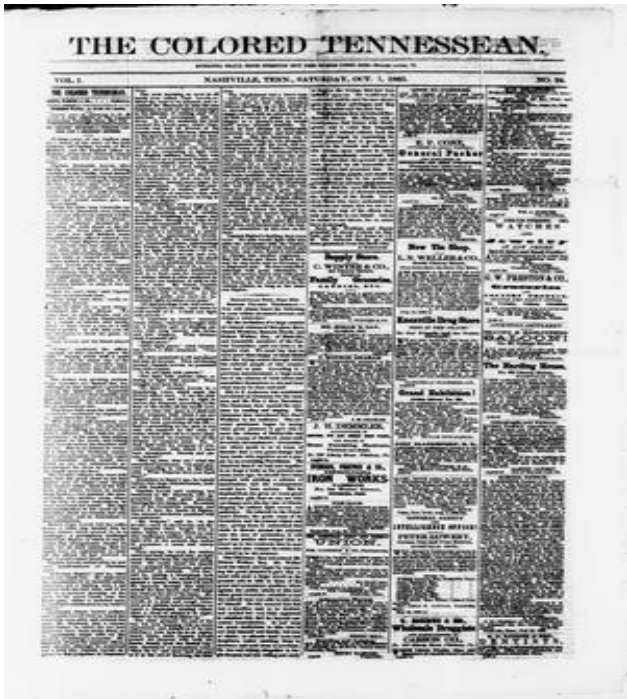


Clinton Bowen Fisk
Fisk University
Freedom Bureau
Pioneer
pg.1

THE COLORED TENNESSEAN

First Statewide Black Newspaper

1865 - 1866



William Bennett Scott, Sr., a free man was born 1821 in Statesville, North Carolina. In 1847, he moved to East Tennessee. After working in the printing trade in Knoxville, Tennessee, W.B. Scott and his sons moved to Nashville and started the states first black newspaper in 1865. The newspaper was published under the name of W.B. Scott and Son. He later moved the newspaper to Maryville, Tennessee. Scott later became the mayor of Maryville in 1869. He crusaded tirelessly for equal rights. William Bennett Scott passed away in 1885. Finally, in 2017 the Tennessee Press Association recognized William B. Scott and his newspaper, " THE COLORED TENNESSEAN," as an honoree.

The black press after the Emancipation Proclamation was critical and necessary for African Americans to be able to read stories that reflected their lives. Many of these newspapers candidly spoke out against the atrocities such as lynchings, burnings and inequality.

There were several newspapers that were published by African Americans in Nashville. The longest running newspaper was R.H. Boyd's, " NASHVILLE GLOBE. " The Boyd family was a powerful voice in the African American community during the early 1900's.

R.H. Boyd was an entrepreneur, who had a vision in publishing amongst other business interests. The " NASHVILLE GLOBE, " was first published in 1906 and ended in 1960. Some of the other newspapers were; TENNESSEAN published 1866 - 1867, NASHVILLE INDEPENDENT published 1931, NASHVILLE DEFENDER published 1938, NASHVILLE COMMENTATOR published 1947 - 1970, NASHVILLE NEWS STAR published 1960 - 1961 and the CITY EXAMINER published 1962 .

Ida B. Wells - Barnett

Prominent American Activist

Ida B. Wells was an African American journalist, activist, educator, entrepreneur and abolitionist who led an anti - lynching crusade in the 1890's. She was also one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.



Wells was born into slavery July 16, 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Her father James Wells was married to Elizabeth Warrenton. James Wells became a trustee of Shaw College and valued education. Ida was legally freed along with her parents and siblings during the Emancipation Proclamation. At the age of 16, both of her parents and a sibling died to the yellow fever epidemic. She moved to be with her grandmother who helped care for her and the siblings. Wells went on to receive her education at Fisk University, LeMoyne -Owen College and Rust College. Ida B. Wells was a teacher in Memphis, Tennessee. Soon afterwards, she became the co - owner of a newspaper, the Memphis Free Speech and Headlight. In the 1890's, Wells documented and exposed the barbaric lynchings in the south that was practiced by racist whites to intimidate and oppress African Americans from economic and political power. Due to her investigative reporting as it related to the terrorism that African Americans were having to endure in the south, black newspapers nationally printed her stories. Because of the exposure, a white mob destroyed her newspaper office and presses. Wells received continuous death threats and decided to leave Memphis and go to Chicago. While in Chicago, she married Ferdinand L. Barnett, a prominent attorney. Barnett founded the Chicago Conservator, the first black newspaper in Chicago. Both Wells and her husband had a common bond for change in how African Americans were being treated. Wells toured Great Britain, Scotland and Wales, addressing audiences of thousands in her campaign against lynching in America. The audiences in Britain were appalled and shocked by the graphic pictures. Ida wrote a book



"The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them. "

- Ida B. Wells-Barnett

continuation -

called Southern Horrors. Lynch Law in All Its Phases , the publication was published October 26, 1892. In 1895, she followed up with further research and detail in a 100 page pamphlet titled, The Red Record. Wells was the first African American woman to be a paid correspondent of a white mainstream newspaper. Frederick Douglas praised Ida for her works and he delegated her to go on his behalf to Great Britain due to his declining health. Ida B. Wells-Barnett continuously fought against racism, sexism and a leader for humanity in the United States and abroad until her passing on Wednesday, March 25, 1931.

Horrible 1892 Lynching On The Woodland Street Bridge

It was the early part of spring on April 27, 1892. Two young white women from Goodlettsville, TN. reported that they were assaulted by several African American men. The two women never made a positive identification of the accused men. The men that were accused was Henry Grizzard, his brothers Ephraim and John Grizzard, along with Mack Harper and Manuel Jones. On April 28th, Henry was caught and hung immediately. John Grizzard and Manuel Jones were released. Around 2pm on April 30th, Ephraim was in jail when an angry mob of over 6,000 took him from his Nashville cell and dragged him through the streets. He was taken to the east side of the Woodland Street Bridge over the Cumberland River. Over 10,000 onlookers watched as the man was being lynched and riddled with over 200 bullets. Ephraim's body was later burned in Goodlettsville.

FORT NEGLEY



During the fall and winter of 1862, over 2,000 free black men and slaves were forced by Union soldiers to build the fortress and protect it against the Confederate soldiers. Black women would wash clothes, cook food and help with building the Fort. They slept and ate in terrible conditions. Many blacks died at Fort Negley. The army never paid these laborers and protectors of Fort Negley as promised.

**David Crosthwaite
Nashville Born Inventor**



Famous Black inventor David Nelson Crosthwaite was born on May 27, 1898 in Nashville, Tennessee. He was an engineer, inventor and writer and held 119 patents nationally and internationally. David is best known for designing the heating system for Radio City Music Hall and the Rockefeller Center in New York. He was an authority on HVAC systems and the technology of regulating temperature control. David Nelson Crosthwaite died February 25, 1976.

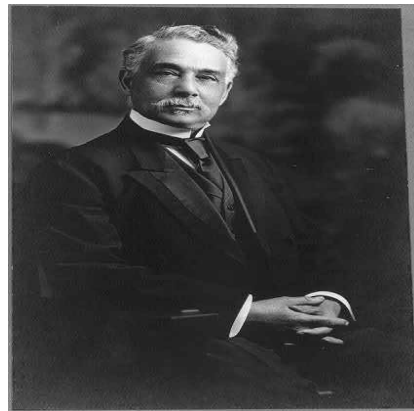
**Fisk University Jubilee Singers
First Original Group 1871**



Jubilee Singers was organized to help Fisk University financially. The ensemble mostly sung slave songs and traditional spirituals. Included were some songs by Stephen Foster.

**Some Black History Facts
Did You Know ?**

James Carroll Napier
June 9, 1845 - April 21, 1940
Lawyer, Businessman, Civic Leader



- J.C. Napier is one of five African Americans to have their signature on American Currency
- First African American State Department Clerk in Washington, D.C.
- Napier was appointed as Register of the Treasury under President William Taft
- Nashville Native who resided in Nashville
- Served on the State of Tennessee Republican Executive Committee for thirty five years
- Served on the Nashville City Council from 1878 - 1885

Famous Fisk University Alum

W.E. DuBois.....civil rights activist, sociologist, historian, author and writer.

- Dubois was the first African American to earn a Ph.D from Harvard
- Co-founded the NAACP

Nikki Giovanni.....American poet, writer, educator and activist

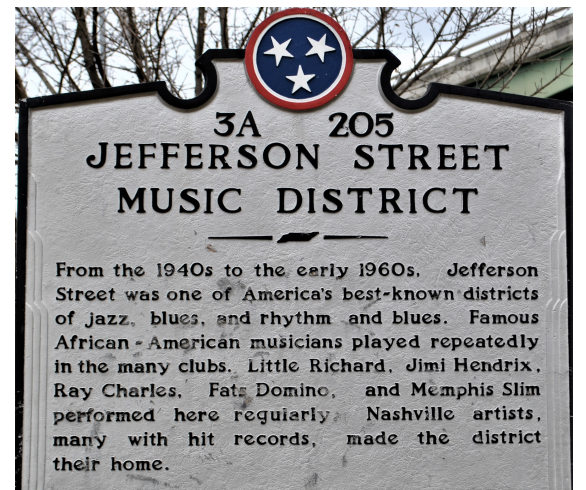
Representative John Lewis.....American politician, civil rights leader, author and activist who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King across the country during the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Rep. Lewis continuously champions equal rights for all Americans

W.C. Handy.....American composer and musician. Handy is considered the "Father of Blues"

Otis Boykin.....American inventor and engineer, Patented 28 devices

Aaron Douglas.....American painter, Fisk professor was a major force during the Harlem Renaissance with his artful illustrations of social issues

**African American Historical Marker
"Let It Be Known"**



Nashville is considered, "Music City U.S.A" but a lot of people are not aware that this city isn't only known for country music. Deford Bailey was one of those country music legends. Many African American musical legends from all over the world and all genres of music has recorded in Nashville.

Jesse Eugene Russell

**Cellular Phone Technology Pioneer
Engineer and Inventor
Nashville Born Native**



Jesse Eugene Russell was born April 26, 1948 in Nashville, Tennessee. Attended Tennessee State University and Stanford University. He studied Electrical Engineering. Russell pioneered digital cellular communications in the 1980's. He holds a U.S. patent for digital cellular design, patent #5,084,869. Russell holds other patents and is still working on innovative technology in the wireless industry. Jesse Eugene Russell was one of the key people in the invention of the modern day cellular phone.

Share your personal stories of history with your family, inform the youth and educate anyone who would like to know why history books didn't tell the many stories of African Americans and their contributions to the world.